BULLETIN OF THE

MADRAS GOVERNMENT MUSEUM

Edited by The Director of Museums, Chennai

EXCAVATIONS BY THE MADRAS MUSEUM AT KILPAUK, PANUNDA, PUNNOL AND SANKAVARAM

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PREFACE

Since the second edition of the book written by Mr.M.D.Raghavan and Dr.N.Devasahayam on the "Excavations by the Madras Museum at Kilpauk, Panunda, Punnol and Sankavaram" published in 1974 ran out of stock about a year ago, the need for reprinting of this book was keenly felt especially in view of the persistent demand for the copies of this handy volume, both from scholars and the public.

This book mainly focuses attention on the prehistoric sites of "Fontenoy" (local residence of the late Mr.E.R. Prudhomma) Kilpauk in Chennai. The significance of "Fontenoy" is that it has yielded information on the first human settlement in this ancient city. The rock-cut cave tombs of North Malabar, Panunda and Punnol are described in this hand book. Apart from this, a pottery sarcophagus in the form of a ram and associated finds from Cuddapah district also find place in this volume. The sarcophagus indicates a second consecrated burial after the initial burial. The reasons therefor are not indicated.

It is hoped that this edition would be useful to the students of history and archaeology.

2000 AD

(R. Kannan)

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THE PREHISTORIC SITE OF FONTENOI, KILPAUK, MADRAS.

The prehistory of South India has received a good deal of attention though sporadically, spread over a period of one hundred years, since Robert Bruce Foote of the Geological Survey of India set the pace with his first discovery of a palaeolithic stone implement at Attirampakkam[1] in the Corteliar valley in the vicinity of Madras in the year 1863. In subsequent years, Bruce Foote extended his field of explorations over Attirampakkam, Vadamadurai, Manjankernai and Pallavaram (Plate 1 Fig. 1). Alexander Rea of the Archaeological Survey of India followed, with his investigations of the Early Iron Age sites of Adichanallur and Perumbair[2].

Of the life of man in the Madras City prior to chronicled history, but little has come to light. Among the few who have contributed to our knowledge of the prehistory of the Madras City, the name stands out of Cammiade[3] as the earliest, followed in later years by the joint contributions by Cammiade, Burkitt and Richards on the Ancient Soak Pits of Chetput, Madras.[4]

A positive step forward was marked by excavations by the staff of the Madras Government Museum in August 1934 of the site of "Fontenoi", the residence of the late Mr. E. R. Prudhomme. The scope of the excavation was restricted to this particular site, with no freedom to explore the adjacent compound already built over. What is presented here are the fruits of the excavation within the "Fontenoi" site.

As pointed out by the excavators, M. D. Raghavan and T. G. Aravamuthan in a Note contributed to the "*Current Science*" Vol. III, No. 3, September 1934[5], the existence of a prehistoric cemetery on this site had been known to a few, about twelve years prior to this excavation. Among these few, is Cammiade who in the course of his explorations of the Chetput site, discovered traces of an ancient village extending from the North Eastern corner of the Chetput Brick fields across the Poonamallee High Road, into a part of the property now known as Landon's Gardens. Cammiade states that the site of the village, was marked by a layer of broken pottery which in places, was three feet deep. Here he found one well, a draw-well. Cammiade tells us that the existence of a cemetery was indicated by the occurrence *in situ*, of a large pyriform burial urn of Adichanallur and Wynad type and by the conical leg of an earthenware legged cist, of the Perumbair type. In the neighbourhood were found, a button shaped gold ornament, earthenware potteries, beads, celts and pottery fragments.

Mr. Prudhomme himself had collected and stored a number of pottery vessels dug up in the course of the building of his house. These include a small sarcophagus and a few pottery vessels of different types. A dominant type is the black and redware largely found at Adichanallur, Tirunelveli District (Plate 111 Figs. 6 & 7). Along with them were also a number of bricks of large dimension which appear to have been used in the construction of a well in the compound.

1. Foote R. B.:—The Foote Collection of Indian Prehistoric and Protohistoric Antiquities, Notes on Ages and Distribution, 1916.
2. Alexander Rea :—Catalogue of Prehistoric Antiquities, Adichanallur and Perumbair, 1915.
3. Cammiade L.A., Burkitt and Richards F.J. :—*Antiquity*, London, Septemper 1930.
4. Cammiade L.A., Burkitt and Richords F.J. :—Ancient Soak pits of Chetput, Madras, *Indian Antiquary*. Volume. LXI 21-23, 1932.
5. M. D. Raghavan and T. G. Aravamuthan :—A Note on Excavations in a Prehistoric site at Kilpauk, Madras. *Current Science*, Vol. III No. 3, Sept. 1934.

These Mr. Prudhomme showed us when we called on him one fine morning in July 1934. Dr. F. H. Gravely, the then Superintendent of the Madras Government Museum, was duly informed of our visit to the site and our talks with Mr. Prudhomme. Mr. Aravamuthan and myself in consultation with Dr. Gravely, carried out the excavation which lasted about a month. Mr. Prudhomme evinced keen interest in our efforts. Often he would come and sit at the site and watch us digging. The objects unearthed were all over an area covering about 40 feet by 20 feet. The finds turned up at depths ranging from 3 to 7 feet in a bed of mixed clay and river sand.

The first day was devoted to a survey of the general lay out, taking decisions in consultation with Mr. Prudhomme as to the site most fruitful to excavate. The next day, excavation revealed the rim of an urn. It turned out to be a big-sized burial urn with the sides badly broken, though the contents were intact (Plate V Fig. 10). The urn measured about 4½ feet high and 2½ feet across.

The antiquities brought to light both in and outside the urn, consisted of black tipped ware with the rim and inside black and the outside red; the all-blackware; a figurine of black pottery of high finish in the shape of a bird and a fine pottery bead (Plate IV Fig. 9). The metallic objects found were two iron implements, a small hoe blade of primitive type with a slightly curved cutting edge and narrow butt and the other, a stick of iron about six inches long.

Subsequent excavations unearthed a sarcophagus about six feet in length, standing on six pairs of short legs (Plate II Fig. 12) closely resembling the specimens found at Perumbair and Pallavaram. It was filled with sand and bits of pottery. The sarcophagus was badly damaged by the roots of a mango tree growing at the site and could not be removed intact. It was removed in sections. Near-by was found a fragment of human tibia.

While the present finds exhibit, characters common to other prehistoric sites in the State, they present distinctive features which mark them off from the finds in other sites. While no sarcophagus was found at the Tirunelveli site, urn burials alone being in evidence, both the types occur at the Kilpauk site. In this respect, they find a parallel to the Perumbair site in Chingleput District indicating affinity in culture. Nevertheless there are outstanding differences too. Unlike Perumbair, the Kilpauk site is rich in fine pottery and abounds in bowls of the black tipped ware, comparatively rare at Perumbair. The fine all-black vessels of the Kilpauk site, distinguish it from both the Adichanallur and Perumbair finds. The black pottery bird figurine, perhaps a votive offering, is a significant find as such figurines have not been met with in similar sites, except in the Nilgiri cairns[6] (Plate V Fig. 12)

All that could be said about the age of the site and that tentatively, is that the pottery appears typical of that of the Early Iron Age, found at other prehistoric sites in South India, such as those at Adichanallur, Perumbair and Raigir in Hyderabad. The character of the associated finds of pottery bead and iron objects indicate that the finds are assignable to an early phase of the Iron Age of South India.

Officers of the Archaeological Survey of India visited the site and took photographs of the site and of some of the finds. The Annual Report of the Survey for 1934-35[7] embodies features of the site and finds in these words:-

"The existence of a Pre-historic cemetery at this site has been known for about the last 12 years to the owner, Mr. E. R. Prudhomme who has unearthed a small sarcophagus and a few small earthen vessels and bricks of large dimensions. The latter also appears to have

6. Breeks. J.W :—An Account of the Primitive Tribes and Monuments of the Nilgiris, 1873.

7. Archaeological Survey of India:— Annual Report, 1934-1935 p-45.

been used in the construction of an ancient well in the compound. Some of these finds were found preserved in Mr. Prudhomme's bungalow. This year, the authorities of the Government Museum, Madras arranged to carry out some further digging with the permission of the owner. The operations were confined to a spot about 36 feet in length by 20 feet in width and were carried to a depth of 7 feet and the finds were made at depths between 3 and 7 feet in the bed of the river sand. The antiquities brought to light consisted of a few large urns, a number of pottery vessels of black polishedware, a highly polished black pottery figurine representing a bird, a small iron hoe-blade of a very primitive type with a curved cutting edge and a narrow butt, an iron rod about 6 inches long, broken in two, besides other small objects. A sarcopha-gus of the Adichanallur type about 6 feet long, standing on six pairs of short legs was also unearthed but was found to have been greatly damaged by the roots of a mango tree. Some fragments of pottery and a bit of human tibia were found in it".

As the first discovery of the kind within the Madras City, except for the Chetput Soak Pits investigated by Cammiade, the Kilpauk excavation attracted wide spread popular interest and the Madras dailies gave wide publicity to the site and the objects revealed to view. Among the many who visited the site was Prof. S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar who expressed that the discovery, the first within the limits of the Madras City, was of profound interest.

Our grateful thanks to Mr. Prudhomme for the facilities he gave us during the course of our excavations.

The obvious significance of the Fontenoi site is that it has yielded us our first steps to our knowledge of the habits and customs of man in this ancient metropolis. The investigations of the last few years have steadily widened the horizones of our knowledge of prehistorie and protohistoric man in South India. The several prehistoric sites explored in different parts-Tamil Nadu, Andhra, Karnataka and Kerala, disconnected and disjointed as seem, yet preach a co-ordinated story of the life of man in the prehistoric age of South India. Hope that it will not be long before an evaluation is carried out of the several excavations taking us nearer to the a chronological sequences of prehistoric cultures of South India.

ANNEXURE 1

Finds from the site of Fontenoi, Kilpauk.

Sl. No.	Accession No.	Description
1	38/34	Urn :—A large burial urn. Elongated body, narrow stemmed bottom—H. 76 c.m. M/d 26 c.m.
2	39a/34	Urn :—Oblong type of burial urn. Four grooves on the broadest portion of the urn—H. 74 c.m., M/d. 33 c.m.
3	39b/34	Pot :—Neck of the urn No. 39a/34. Neck grooved thick rim—H. 25 c.m., M/d. 31·5 c.m.
4	40/34	Pot :—Narrow mouth red and blackware, with a band of linear grooves on the neck. Rounded bottom. Side broken—H. 24 c.m., M/d. 8·5 c.m.
5	41/34	Pot :—Narrow mouth red and blackware, smaller in size, with grooves in the neck. Rim and side portions broken—H. 21·5 c.m., D. 20 c.m.
6	42/34	Pot .—Narrow mouth broken, redware—H. 24 c.m., M/d. 10 c.m. D. 23 c.m.
7	43/34	Panai :—Grooves round the neck wide month, redware earth inside—H. 23 c.m., M/d. 13 c.m.
8	44/34	Panai :—Rimmed mouth, short neck with round conical base redware bottom broken—H. 23 c.m., M/d. 13 c.m.
9	45/34	Mondai :—Water pot incised lines, inside rim, redware—H. 20·5 c.m., M/d. 21 c.m.
10	46/34	Mondai :—Water pot, broken into pieces, red inside and out side.
11	47/34	Mondai ;—Water pot, broken, redware H. 17 c.m., M/d. 9 c.m.
12	48/34	Mondai :—Water pot, rim broken incised lines along shoulder—H. 19 c.m., M/d. 9 c.m.
13	49/34	Mondai :—Water pot, small in size, mouth broken—H. 16 c.m., M/d. 9 c.m.
14	50/34	Goblet :—Kuja, mouth broken, red on bothsides—H. 20 c.m., M/d, 8·5 c.m.
15	51/34	Goblet :—Kuja, incised line on the shoulder. Hatching ridge round the neck near the rim and moulded inside neck. Red on both sides—H. 26 c.m., M/d. 9 c.m., D. 20 c.m.
16	52/34	Pot :—Mouth broken, grooves round the shoulder, red on both sides—H. 14 c.m., M/d. 7 c.m., D. 20 c.m.

(1)	(2)	(3)
17	53/34	Pot:—Bigger in size than No. 52/34. Rim is broken. Hatching round the shoulder. Red on both sides— H. 14·5 c.m , M/d. 7 c.m., D. 24 c.m.
18	54/34	Bowl:—Blackware, broken into pieces, inside lines round the rim and latching.
19	55/34	Bowl:—Red and blackware, cracked—H. 14·5 c.m., M/d. 18·5 c.m.
20	56/34	Bowl:—Black and redware. Moulding inside and outside with latching —H. 14 c.m., M/d. 13 c.m.
21	57/34	Bowl:—Broken at redware. Finger bowl. Mouldings inside and out along the rim. Bottom broken—H. 10 c.m , M/d. 10 c m.
22	58/34	Bowl:—Broken at the bottom. Incised line along outer and inner rim. Black and redware—H. 7 c.m., M/d. 15 c.m.
23	59/34	Bowl:—All black bowl, moulding along the rim and shoulder—H. 15 c m., M/d. 17 c.m.
24	60/34	Bowl:—Plain type, black and redware. Bowl is filled with earth—H. 7 c.m., M/d. 14 c m.
25	61/34	Bowl:—Black and redware, infragments.
26	62/34	Bowl:—All black with ridge along the shoulder. Sharp pointed bottom, recalling the cocoanut form. Completely filled with earth—H. 13 c.m., M/d. 13 c.m.
27	63/34	Gobet:—In pieces—H. 19 c m. M/d. 10·8 c.m.
28	64/34	Censer:—The only specimen found in the excavation. Bowl part incomplete. Moulded rim and stem—Redware H. 19 c.m., M/d. 10·8 c.m.
29	65/34	Pot.—Black and redware—H. 11 c.m. M/d. 9·5 c.m.
30	66/34	Pot:—Broken into bits. Blackware. Linear designs inside.
31	67/34	Pottery lid:—Blackware, bottom edge slightly broken—H. 13 c.m., D. 13 c.m.
32	68/34	Pottery lid:—Blackware, top knob broken—H. 7 c.m., D. 13 c.m.
33	69/34	Pottery lid:—Black on both sides—H. 8 c.m., D. 15 c.m.
34	70/34	Pottery lid:—Black on both sides—H. 8 c.m., D. 15 c.m.
35	71/34	Pottery ring stand:—Black ring stand at the top and bottom—H. 10 c.m., D. 13 c.m.
36	72/34	Pottery ring stand:—Black broken at the edged—H. 7·5 c.m., D. 12·5 c.m.
37	73/34	Pottery ring stand:—Blackware—H. 8·5 c.m., D. 13 c.m.

(1)	(2)	(3)
38	74/34	Pottery ring stand:—Black all over, broken at the edges—H. 7·5 c.m., D. 12 c.m.
39	75/34	Pottery bird figurine:—All black slightly chipped at either end—B. 9 c.m., H. 2·5 c.m.
40	76/34	Iron hoe blade:—Broken into pieces, of the same shape as the hoes excavated from Adichanallur.
41	77/34	Iron stick:—Broken into pieces, with blunt ends—L. 13 c.m., B. 1·5 c.m.
42	78/34	Pottery bead:—Seen in two sections. Red all over—L. 4 c.m., B. 5 c.m.
43	79/34	Bones:—In bits from urn.
44	80/34	Hammer stone:—Granite hammerstone of crude type. More or less rectangular—L. 7 c.m., B. 5·5 c.m.
45	81/34	A pot sherd;—Ir-regular shape with bluish green glazed enamal—L. 6 c.m. B. 4·5 c.m.
46	82/33	Fragment of a bowl:—Fragment from a black bowl, mouldings inside and out.
47	83/34	A pot sherd:—Bottom piece of a pot.
48	84/34 to 110/34	Pot sherds:—Twenty seven potsherds of decorative patterns.
49	110a/34 to 111n/34	Pieces of sarcophagus:—Eighteen pieces of a sarcophagus.

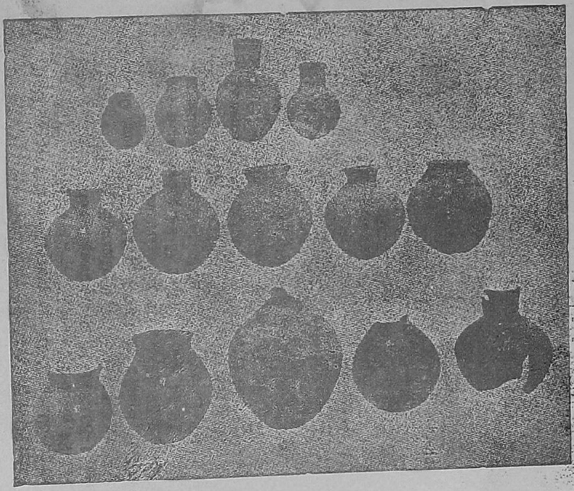
1. First Stone implement discovered at Pallavaram by R. B. Foote in [illegible]

2. Kilpauk excavation, sarcophagus in-situ.

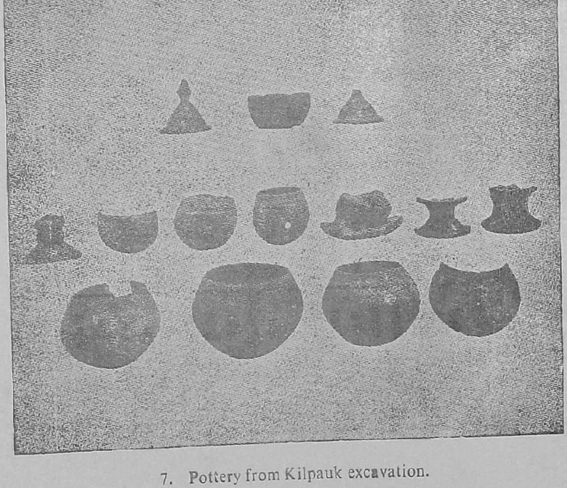
3. Kilpauk excavation, urn and potteries in-situ.

4. Kilpauk excavation, sarcophagus in-situ.

5. Kilpauk excavation, sarcophagus in-situ.

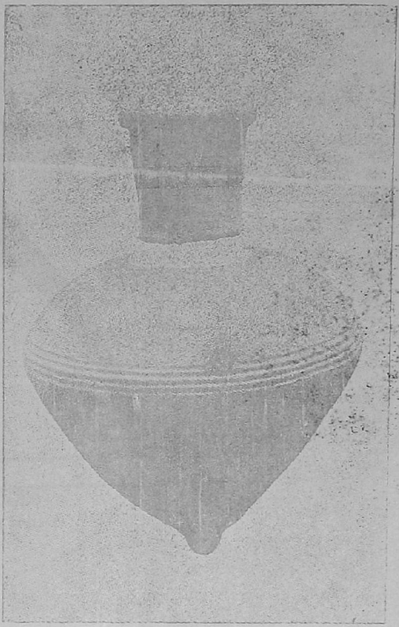


6. Pottery from Kilpauk excavation.



7. Pottery from Kilpauk excavation.

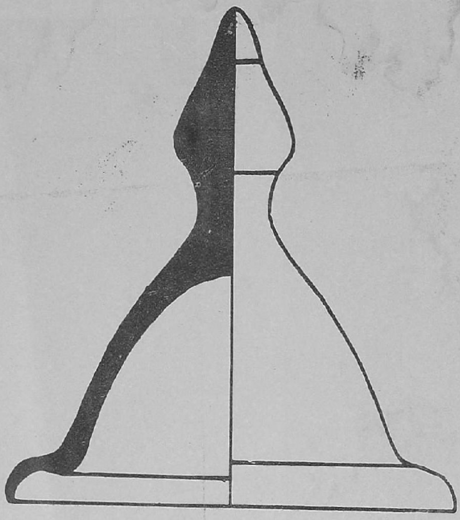
10. Burial urn from Kilpauk excavation



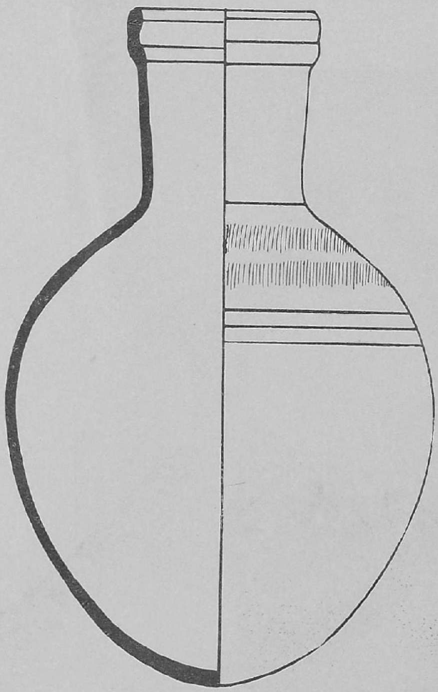
11. Burial urn from Kilpauk excavation.

12. Terracotta bird figurine, Nilgiris excavation.

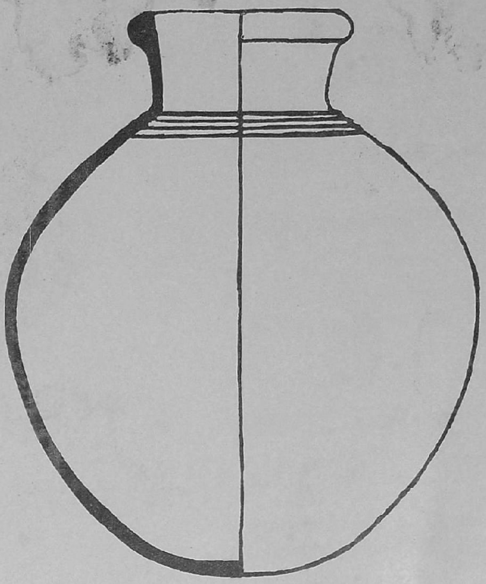
Plate VI



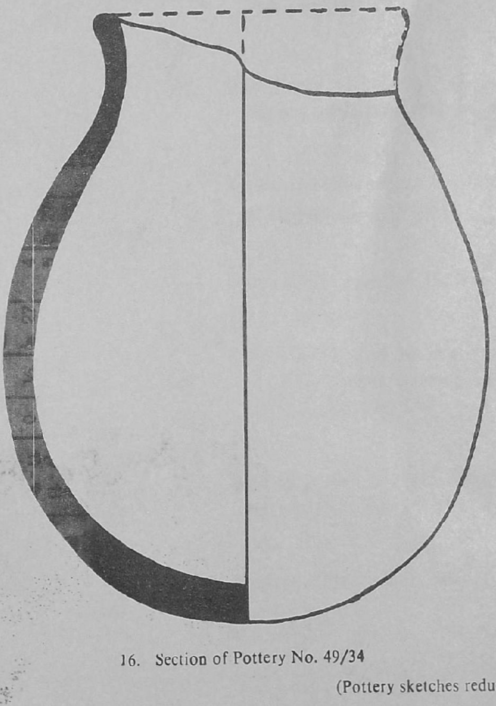
13. Section of Pottery No. 67/34



14. Section of Pottery No. 51/34



15. Section of Pottery No. 42/34



16. Section of Pottery No. 49/34

(Pottery sketches reduced to 1/3 of original size)

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ROCK-CUT CAVE TOMBS OF NORTH MALABAR

In recent years funerary rock-cut caves have been reported in increasing numbers from various sites in the district of Malabar. Babington[1] was the first to report on the sepulchral monuments of Malabar known by the names of Toppikallu, Hat Stone, Kudakallu, Umbrella stone. Logan[2] and Rea[3] followed with accounts of further discoveries of caves in the district. More recently Prof. Jouveau-Dubreuil examined the Malabar caves in greater detail and published his results in a pamphlet, entitled "Vedic Antiquities".

In October 1934 the local papers announced the accidental discovery of two caves at Panunda, about 8 miles northeast of Tellicherry in North Malabar, at a site in the vicinity of a Saivite shrine, where two caves had been previously discovered. These form an interesting series of four caves, which I visited in December 1934. An examination of the bigger of the two caves yielded a spear 3 feet 4 inches long with a knob at one end, and a small grind stone and roller of excellent finish.

From the second and smaller cave, a miscellaneous collection of iron objects was recovered—knives, chisels, spears, sharp pointed rods and nails. From both were collected a quantity of fragments of bones much decayed and chalky white in colour. The pottery in both the caves had already been smashed to pieces.

From here, receiving reports of two caves at Punnol to the South of Tellicherry, I paid a visit to the place. The caves are by the side of the main road and are both comparatively small in dimensions.[4]

A bhajana madham (hall of worship) had already been erected at the site, for meetings and prayers. Not far from this site is the Chelleth Kavu, one of the numerous shrines devoted to the cult of the minor deities, scattered throughout North Malabar.

Punnol being a region rich in laterite rocks well suited for caves, I was prompted to attempt a survey of the area in the immediate vicinity of the Chelleth shrine. Trial excavations were made at a few of the laterite strata. In the excavation of this site, I received considerable help from K. Nanu Master, a prominent resident here. At one of these sites, the spade struck a heavy slab of stone vertically placed suggestive of a cavity behind. Excavation concentrated at this spot proved fruitful. As the excavaton proceeded, a cave was duly exposed to view. Finding my way, through its narrow entrance cut in the laterite rock, the sight that met my eyes was most gratifying. Here were an array of pottery and other objects deposited on slightly raised platforms cut in the laterite.

The pottery are of three kinds, the four-legged, the round-bottomed, and the narrow bottomed, the last, a big sized vessel standing on iron tripod (Plate II Fig. 3).

Three of the four footed vessels, are decorated by geometrical designs and bands in monochrome. Two of the small globular jars and one of the four-footed type, are adorned, with single bands of black in neck and shoulder. The colour in all designs is a dull black, which would have been applied directly on the pottery after the firing. The designs are faint

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1. Babington :—Transactions of the Bombay Literary Society, 1819.
2. Logan :—Manual of Malabar, Vol. I, p. 180—*Indian Antiquary* Vol. III.
3. Annual Report :—Madras Archaeological Department, 1919-11.
4. Sewell R. :—List of Antiquities, P. 1.

owing to scaling caused by the damp and by the overlying laterite dust. The black appears to be a cold black of some form of carbon unmixed with other colours. The designs are more or less regular and uniform, indicating that the painting was done with a brush. The lines of the designs are flush with the surface and the paint applied in the watery state has permeated below the surface.

The decorative motifs on the three vessels bearing geometrical designs, include groups of triangles in black outline (Plate IV Fig. 7). The designs in other two are wide vertical panels filled in with dots. A plain band borders the designs on the shoulders of the two pots.

Of outstanding interest, is the pottery bowl which are preserved the bone relics, covered over with a lid. The latter has a perforated knob with a pair of lugs symmetrically placed on either side. The perforation is perfectly round. The material of the lid differs from that of the rest of the pottery, the clay being of dull black colour. Handled vases are rare in ancient Indian pottery. This piece of handled bowl, is thus a specimen of particular interest.

All the pottery are wheelmade. The vessels have a cream coloured base, apparently the colour of the clay, coated with a buff coloured and uniform slip, well and thickly applied. The slip however shows a tendency to separate when washed in water. The pottery is a substantial thick ware, evenly finished and well baked. There is no ring stand to support the round-bottomed pottery. The legged pots have a characteristic rim, not everted or folded over.

The polishing was apparently done after applying the slip. The potters of the adjacant village of Kovur, use a coconut shell open at both sides, as their only polishing appliance. The potter supports the pot on the left arm thrusting it inside, and the entire outer surface is rubbed over by the shell held in the right hand with a rotatory movement of vessel. The method is apparently one that dates from the early days.

The antiquities in metal comprise five objects in iron, including a bar of iron 17½ inches long, with a waist, about, 3½ inches form the top. Round the waist is twisted a piece of strong iron rod, the two ends of which hang down on either side. Judging from the figures of conventionalized human form, featured in the cave art of pre-historic Europe,[5] the probability is strong that it is an effigy symbolic of the deceased. From the manner of its disposition in the cave stuck up with the hands hanging down, it very much simulates the human figure. The other objects are a sharp iron stick, thick in the middle and pointed at either end, suggestive of the writing stylus of iron in use in Malabar from very early times and surviving to the present day for writing on palm leaf. All the antiquities found were removed to the Madras Government Museum.

A sufficiently wide area of spreading laterite rock, is the first requisite for a cave of this type. The side sloping towards the east, is evenly and perpendicularly cut down and rectangular recesses out in the rock in a graded series each narrower than the other, culminating in a narrow opening about 2½ feet by 1½ feet which ultimately forms the doorway, through which the boring proceeds. The solid mass within is hollowed out, all but a pillar, left standing opposite the entrance. The column is rectangular at its base, but rounded higher up with radiating shafts on either side, forming with the side walls of the cave symmetrical radiating archs which support the vault of the cave fully domed and hemispherical. The central pillar is thus not a mere ornamental appendage which could have been dispensed with but indispensable to the structure and essential to its stability, bearing all the pressure and thrust of the mass above, and giving the whole cave the character of an enduring monument. A raised platform is left on either side, for keeping food and drink.

5. Peake and Fleure :- Hunters and Artists, p. 101, Fig. 55
"Spanish petroglyphs representing human figures more or less conventionalized".

The flat facade presenting a graded series of jambs, and vaulted and hemispherical dome, the interior furnishing with its shapely column and symmetrical platforms, all testify to the high skill attained by these early cave builders. These caves are however devoid of any attempt at sculpture, excepting for a decorative pattern of leaves sculptures on one side of the central pillar in one of the Panunda caves. It is not clear whether the idea was to continue the leaf motif all round the pillar so as to form a capital. That it had not been continued all round indicates that it was abandoned, possibly because such a step might have been prejudicial to the stability of the structure.

The arch form of the vault of the cave, is fully circular in section (Plate III Figs. 5 & 6) not taking the form of the pointed or the horizontal arch—a structural example of the true radiating arch. These caves thus furnish an interesting link in the chain of the growth of the domed architecture. The vast majority of these rock-cut tombs probably remain entombed without any indication outside of their existence.

Prof. Jouveau-Dubreuil in his "Vedic Antiquities", puts forward a strong plea for considering these caves to be Vedic stupas of Pre-Buddhist age, "hemispherical tombs for the relics of the Aryan chief, imitating the primitive Aryan hut, which was a hemispherical dome made of timber covered with clay and the Buddhist stupa, is a development from the Vedic stupa of the Aryans". Against this, it may be pointed out that evidence is not in favour of the Aryans having been a tomb building people[6]. As to the stupa, it is more probable that it is "the lineal or direct descent of the sepulchral tumulus or circular mound of the early megalithic peoples[7], a development out of these early structures rather than from any form of the Aryan hut".

It is not easy to deal with the problem of age of these caves, and the class or race of people who were responsible for excavating them. The bones collected from the Panunda caves, show great decay and are almost chalky-white in appearance, indicative of high antiquity. Those inside the Chelleth cave, were better preserved in the bowl, and are of a reddish tinge apparently from the adhering laterite dust. While these bones testify to the sepulchral nature of the caves, the remains bear no signs of charring or cremating. The burials do not therefore seem to be of the nature of secondary burials, or consecration graves, as the fragmentary character of the bones leads us to conclude. In these secondary burials the body was disinterred after the flesh had decayed, and a selection of bones, given a ceremonial or consecration burial in urns, sarcophagi or sepulchral caves or tombs.

Logan[8] quotes a Chinese pilgrim who visited Malabar, one of the numerous Chinese pilgrims who flocked to India, who is credited with having written in 605 A.D., that the bones of the dead are buried and their ashes placed in a *so-tu* (stupa). Logan[9], considers this "a practice which Malayalis certainly observed, if the evidence of the rude stone monuments of the district signifies anything." The interior of the rock-cut caves is in the shape of a hollow stupa, as archaeologists have observed, and the Chinese pilgrim was apparently referring to

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6. Ferguson :—Rude Stone Monuments, p. 39.

7. Ferguson :—Rude Stone Monuments, p. 490.
Ferguson :—History of India and Eastern Architecture, Introduction. p. 39.
"The worship foreshadowed in the Vedas is of a class too purely intellectual to require the assistance of the stone mason and the carver to give it expression. The Vedic Aryans were no builders, leaste of all of carvings in rocks".

8 Logan —Manual of the Malabar Vol. I. p. 263.

9. This view of Logan has found substantial support with the passage of years. The latest in this series, is a News report of a discovery at Egandiyur in Trichur district, of antiquities disclosed to view during a breach of this road in heavy rains, of "Giant earthern jars believed to be remnants of the Mahasila Age the age of Megalithic structures. The Director of Archaeology, Mr. N. G. Unnithan, who inspected the finds, agreed with the opinion that these contained skeletal remains of humans. The interior of the jars are attractively smoothened. Besides human bones, several earthen vessels and ornaments were also found."—(**The Indian Express**, dated August 19, 1968).

these caves and other sepulchral structures of the district. Cave burials obviously go back to a distant date in the history and culture of Kerala, as in the history of most other Asiatic countries, and Logan is presumably correct in assuming the monuments to the dead, to have been erected by the early peoples of Malabar prior to the intrusive culture of the Vedic Brahmins, whose death ceremonies were much simpler, and who had "no necessity for costly death houses or for furnishing such with all the deceased's weapons and implements in use by him during life".

While the sepulchral nature of the caves is thus obvious, there is yet another aspect to be considered—whether at any time in the history of the country, rock-cut enclosures may have been used as abodes of the living. An interesting side light on this aspect, is thrown by the folk songs of the country. One such song[10] refers to the construction of a rock-cut cell in order to shelter a child—the sole male issue of a family subjected to *Kudipaka*, or hereditary bloodfeud, a form of vendetta which obtained in mediaeval Malabar, by which the aggrieved family took the law into its own hands, and vowed vengence, the vow taking the form of an oath to kill every male issue of the rival family for generations. The child, Koman by name, of one such family is brought up in secret, lodged in a rock-cave concealed from public view until he grew into manhood.

The nearest parallel which these caves bear to the dwelling houses of the living seems to be to the hut of the Todas of the Nilgiris, with its raised platforms for keeping the belongings. It will be interesting to pursue the matter further with a view to discovering whether there is any evidence to indicate that the earliest type of Malabar houses may have been circular or vaulted in design, and how far the rock-cut cave of the dead may be a replica of the house of the living, the house of the dead being among early peoples generally designed and constructed on the same plan as the house of the living. While the fact that these caves open towards the east, and that for the greater part of the day, the cave is fairly lit by the rays of the sun, argues in favour of their possible use as habitation, the low roof of most of the caves (the biggest of the Panunda caves has an altitude of only 2½ feet from the floor of the vault) which does not permit of erect posture, argues against it.

The culture complex of these rock-cut cellars will not be complete without a passing mention of the traditions in parts of North Malabar that rock cellars of this sort, were abodes of a sect of yogis who were once distributed over parts of North Malabar extending to the neighbouring South Kanara district. Three regions traditionally reputed as the homes of the Yogis in North Malabar are Iringal in Kurumbernad taluk, Peravur in Kottayam taluk and Cherukunnu in Chirakkal taluk. Our earliest source on the life of the Yogis or Yogi Gurukkals, to denote them by their full name, is the Chronicle of Philip Baldaeus[11], the Dutch historian.

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10. Menon, Chelnat Achyuta :—"Koman Nair", Trivandrum, 1931.
    Vadakkan Pattuka—Folk Songs of North Malabar.
    University of Madras.

11. "An exact description of the coasts of Malabar and Coromandel in the East Indies, Amsterdam"—1672—Vol. III, page. 896.

Other sources are "Dictionary of the Religious ceremonies of the Eastern Nations", Calcutta 1787 (Joguis).

Gazetter :—South Canara district, 1938, page. 390

Raghavan, M. D. :—"Yogi Gurukkals of North Malabar,"
All India Oriental Conference, IX Session,
Trivandram.
Folk Plays and Dances of Kerala,
Sahitya Akademy, Trichur, 1947, p. 9.

The Yogis or Yogi Gurukkals were a social group devoted to the practice of magical and occult ceremonials, mainly the Sakti Cult, the Sakti or Saktaya Puja, held annually at ancestral Nayar and Tiyar households in North Malabar. The priest conducting these elaborate ceremonials were the Yogis. In their sacerdotal character they survived and perhaps still survive in South Kanara district, where twelve Yogi mutts prevailed, of which three remained for long. The best known of these is the Kadiri mutt adjoining the Manjunatha temple in Mangalore.

Among the North Malabar sites is the one at Ponniyam, Kadirur where in the compound of the household known by the name of *Choyadam*, interpreted as a colloquial form of the name, *Yogi madam*, an abode of the Yogis[11]. At about the time of my study of the rock-cut caves of Panunda, the Ponniyam site came in incidentally for an on the spot examination. Here in the compound of this house at the time of my visit, were two rock shelters crumbling in decay. The tradition prevailing here is that they were once the shelters of Yogis, who lived and entered into samadhi in these rock recesses.

Caves with arched doorways in South Kanara that survived till a few decades ago, are believed to have been erected by Yogis. In them were found *agnikundams, trisulas*, metal cases, tongs and knives, presumed to have been used by the Yogis. Such caves were also reported from the sites near Kumbla in Vittal at Kadiri and other sites in South Kanara district.

We have finally to consider the problem already suggested, whether these stone monuments of Malabar do not more properly belong to the category of magalithic structures[11]. Ferguson in his account of megalithic monuments of Western India, refers to the stone chambers of Malabar always buried in the earth, only showing the cap-stone flush with the surface of the soil[12]. By these, he no doubt means the caves commonly reported from South Malabar[13] which may be referred approximately to the same period of time and culture, as the caves of North Malabar, judging from the character of the associated finds such as the iron objects and pottery.

Whether these caves are the work of a race of Mediterranean stock who settled in Kerala before the coming of the Aryan speaking peoples or whether they are to be ascribed to the Vedic ages as Prof. Dubreuil considers, or to the later Vedic Brahmins or whether they were the works of the Buddhists of Kerala, are questions which cannot be satisfactorily answered until a more complete investigation is carried out than has hither to been attempted.

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12. Ferguson :— Rude Stone Monuments of All countries. p. 472.
13. A. Aiyappan :— Rock-cut cave tombs of Feroke. South Malabar Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society—XXII—Vol. 3.

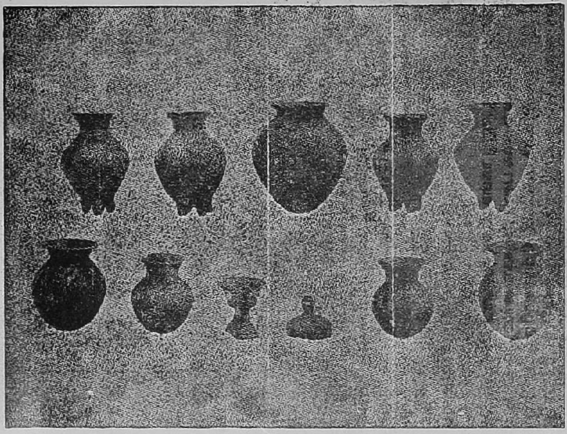
ANNEXURE II.

Finds from the site of Panuda. Eruvetti Desam. Kottayam Taluk. North Malabar.

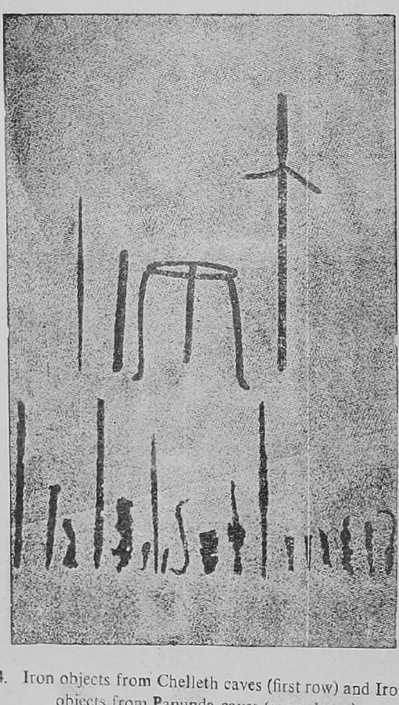
Sl. No.	Accession No.	Description
1.	1/35	**A long iron spear**:—Working end is not pointed. A knob at the other end—L. 106. c.m., Thickness 1·5 c.m.
2.	2a/35	**A grind stone**:—Highly ferruginous sandstone. Rectangular in shape, with legs at the four corners—L. 17 c.m., Br. 11 c.m., Thickness 4·5 c.m.
3.	2b/35	**A stone roller**:—Highly ferruginous sandstone. Cylindrical in shape—L. 16 c.m., Dia. 3·5 c.m.
4.	3a/35 to 3r/35	Iron objects:—Eighteen from neighbouring cave, consisting of knives, chisels, hooks, nails etc, very rusty.
5.	4a/35	Potter's wheel:—Composed of clay and coconut fibre.
	4b/35	Round stone:—Probably a mealing stone. L. 11 c.m., Br. 9 c.m.
	4c/35	**Beater**:—Wooden piece.
	4d/35	Cocoanut shell:—For polishing.
6.	5/35	Pottery:—Four footed vessel with geometrical designs in black.
7.	6/35	Pottery:—Four footed vessel with geometrical designs in black. Mouth broken—H. 28 c.m., M/d. 12·5 c.m.
8.	7/35	**Pottery**:—Four footed vessel with geometrical designs in black. Redware—H. 15·5 c.m., M/d. 12·5 c.m.
9.	8/35	Pottery:—Four footed vessel with bands in neck and shoulder.
10.	9/35	Pottery vessel:—With wide mouth and rounded bottom.
11.	10/35	Pottery vessel:—With wide mouth and rounded bottom, redware. H. 20·5 c.m., M/d. 14 c.m.
12.	11/35	Pottery vessel:—With wide mouth and rounded bottom redware.
13.	12/35	Pottery vessel:—With wide mouth and rounded bottom. Redware—H. 17 c.m., M/d. 12 c.m.
14.	13/35	Pottery:—Bigger vessel.
15.	14/35	Pottery:—Pot reliquary.
16.	15/35	Pottery lid:—With perforated knob.
17.	16/35	**Bone**:—Bones in reliquary.
18.	17/35	Iron tripod:—For vessel no 13/35—H. 16·5 cm., D. 15·5 c m.
19.	18a/35	Sword:—Broken in the middle an iron rod is twisted around—L. 44 c.m., Thickness. 1 c.m.
	18b/35	A broken piece of iron:—Measuring 21·5 c.m.
	18c/35	Iron spindle:—Length 25·5 c.m., Thickness 0·75 c.m.
	18d/35	A broken piece of iron:—Measuring 19·2 c.m.

1. Panunda cave No. I

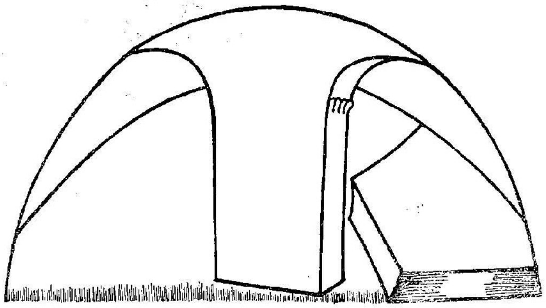
2. Panunda cave No. II



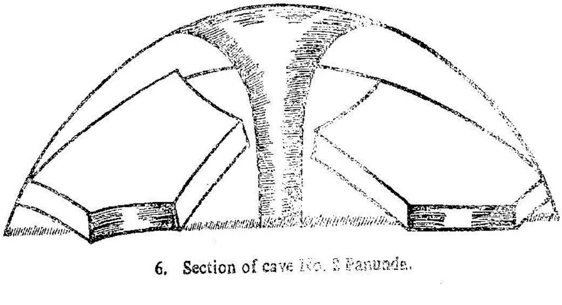
3. Pottery from Chelleth Punnol caves.



4. Iron objects from Chelleth caves (first row) and Iron objects from Panunda caves (second row)

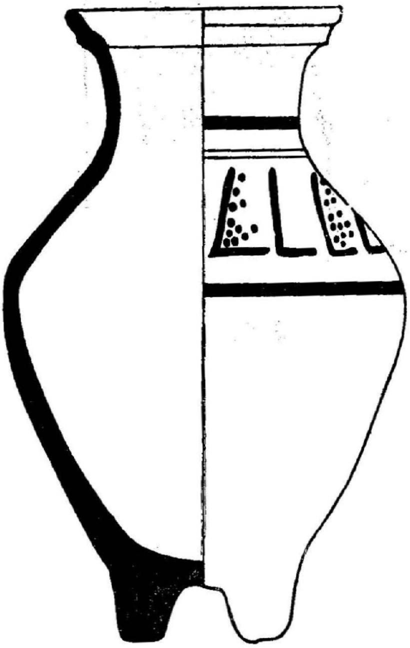


5. Section of cave No. 1 Panunda.

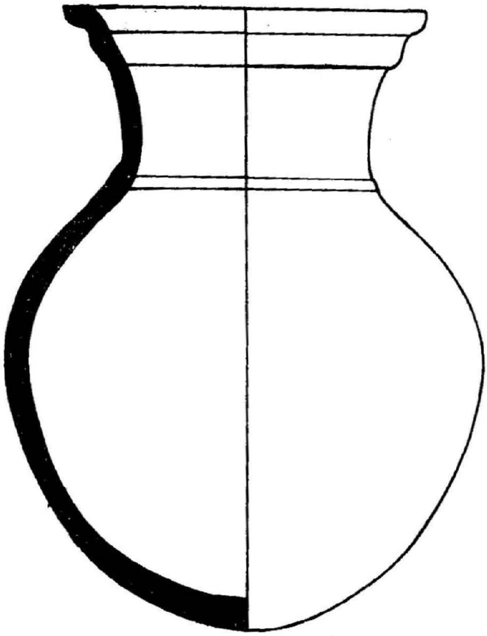


6. Section of cave No. 2 Panunda.

Plate IV



7. Section of pottery No. 7/35.



8. Section of pottery No. 12/35.

(Pottery sketches reduced to 1/3 of original size)

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A POTTERY SARCOPHAGUS IN THE FORM OF A RAM, AND ASSOCIATED FINDS FROM CUDDAPAH DISTRICT

The sight that greets the eye of the visitor to Museum, as he enters the Gallery of Prehistoric Antiquities, is something spectacular. To the left of him, stands a big model of a Ram in pottery, the exhibit now familiarly known as the Ram Sarcophagus from Cuddapah, added to the Museum collections in July 1935.

Revealed to view in the course of digging the foundations of a new church at Sankavaram in the Cuddapah district, we are grateful to the Bishop of Dornakal for bringing it to the notice of the Museum. On the face of it, I deemed it worthwhile to have an on the spot examination. Dr. Gravely, the then Superintendent agreeing with me, I was duly authorised to proceed to the spot and examine the object unearthed, and to transport it over to the Museum, if sufficiently interesting.

Situated at a distance of sixty miles from the Cuddapah railway station, the shades of night were closing in over this remote village of Porumamilla, as I reached my destination, the residence of Rev. Christudary. A look at the remarkable find, in the closing twilight, convinced my first impressions that here was something quite out of the ordinary.

As it dawned and the day brightened, the nature of the country around unfolded itself as a grassy plain over which flocks of sheep were nibbling at the shoots of grass. This sustained the idea of the villagers being largely pastoral.

A closer inspection of the pottery sarcophagus strengthened my feeling that it far surpassed anything yet come to light. Other features apart, are its six legs, two more than the normal four. Standing 52·5 c.m. high, and 81 c m. long, it is massive in proportions (Plate I Fig. 1) and could not have rested stable or lasted long, without its supernumerary two legs. Everything else about its external features, is well oriented to each other in the making of this pottery receptacle to preserve the skeletal remains enclosed. The bones are definitely human evidently of a very important person.

To take the rest of the parts one by one, first is the domed lid in two sections. The front section, slightly more elevated than the hind one, ends in an arched neck, with a slot, within which is fitted the cleverly fashioned head. The hind part is realistically moulded, omitting the tail difficult to make and obviously not essential for the purpose of a receptacle to contain the skeletal remains.

Omitted too are the ears serving no purpose either, in the conception of a funerary container. The trunk is decorated with impressed rope-work design. About half way from the top of the front section, a hole is placed symmetrically on either side. Viewed as a whole, all the parts harmonise with one another, making for an object of art, ingeniously designed and skilfully executed, an outstanding example of craftsmanship in pottery, whatever its age.

The problem of assigning an approximate period of time to the sarcophagus, is an aspect that cannot be considered in isolation. It is very probable that the site marked an ancient cemetery, and explorations may yet reveal other antiquities of this or other type. For this and other reasons, one cannot be dogmatic in dating the find. Though generally speaking the term Early Iron Age has been applied to antiquities from other sites in South India as Adichanallur and Perumbair, the significance of the expression Early Iron Age, in terms of prehistoric chronology, has yet to be established.

The only other known funerary vessel in animal figure from South India, is a small elephantoid urn from the banks of the Tungabhadra (Plate II Fig. 4) in the reserve collections of the Madras Government Museum.

The eleborate impressed rope work decoration of the figure suggests the trappings of an animal caparisoned for riding. Two pieces of iron, a spear head and a fragment of a knife or sickle, were inside the sarcophagus and an interesting series of pottery (Plate 1 Fig. 2) the squat tpye of vessel with shield shape back, predominating. The pans are highly polished and bear spiral marking inside.

In the course of a personal discussion, Mr. T. G. Aravamuthan expounded that the Ram is often looked upon in primitive thought as an embodiment of the soul of the dead and in early Indian form, the Ram deity is invoked as Naigamesha to obtain a son, though in medical treatises, Naigamesha as a Ram faced demon, causes childrens' diseases. Association of the two ideas may have suggested the use of the Ram faced form, as a request that the deceased may be reborn through Naigamesha's influence.

The Sarcophagus and the associated finds were exhibited at a general meeting of the Archaeological Society of South India held on August 20th 1935. Following is a brief summary of a paper I read at the meeting, and the discussions that ensued as recorded in the Proceedings of the Meeting:—

" The sarcophagus contained a fractional human interment evidently a secondary burial signifying that following an earlier burial, the bones were exhumed and given a consecrated burial inside a sarcophagus or urn. It is unique among such sarcophagi so far discovered in possessing a clearly modelled animal head, that of a ram, the curved horns, being emphasised but the ears and tail omitted. As the object of primitive art is to produce a symbolic rather than a faultless representation, such emphasis of the most conspicuous parts, is frequent. Certain animals, including the ram, came to be regarded as embodiments of the souls of the dead. Animals are sometimes regarded also as the carriers of souls to the other world. The decoration of the sarcophagus suggestive of an animal caprisoned for riding, seems to bear out this idea. The ram has its own role too in various cults, and acts as the scape goat among certain pastoral peoples. Sheep farming is still a flourishing industry in the locality and may have been so from early ages, as there is evidence of the early domestication of sheep in South India. Though found in black clay, the outside of the sarcophagus is lime-washed, especially the domed lid in two parts, the front one including the neck into which the head fits as a cork fits into a bottle. The white-washing may be purely to preserve the pottery in a soil of black clay. The contained bones, though much decayed are not charred. The worn state of the molars and the condition of the skull sutures show them to have belonged to an adult person".

In answer to questions by V.R.R. Dikshitar and the Chairman, Mr. Raghavan pointed out that the six legs were obviously needed to support the weight. the presence of the extra pair being no more significant than the absence of ears and tail; and that the sarcophagus was found at a depth of about six feet with all the pots arranged round it except for one black pot with lid which was inside, together with two pieces of iron knives.

Doubt was expressed by the Chairman and others as to whether such finds could be assumed to be of any great age. Dr. Venkataramanayya pointed out that the Ram was the carrier of oblations to the Hindu gods. Miss Meenakshi mentioned the existence in Cuddapah district of cell tombs known locally as Pandava galla, in which, she believed, were found pots bearing figures of rams.

Col. Wright, after examining the bones, hoped that some reconstruction of the skull might prove to be possible. In concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that he hoped this was only a beginning and that if he would have the courage to dig, many other such finds might be made and the badly needed pottery time-scale for South India might at last be established.

The Corn Spirit

Before concluding, I may in passing draw upon the traditional folk culture, of pastoral societies in widely scattered parts of the world. The complex of these beliefs and customs, is too vast to be reviewed here. Nevertheless a few of the more noteworthy, may be touched upon so far as relevant to the present context. Of the Ram as an embodiment of the Soul of the dead and of Naigamesha the Ram deity, something has already been said, based on the observations of Mr. Aravamuthan.

Such beliefs apart, on a different plane of culture, are a vast field of beliefs and faith of pastoral peoples. Among these is the concept of a Corn Spirit, symbolic of the life of the corn, the belief that the generating forces of the corn assume the form of an animal,—the ram, or pig, dog, cat or cow. The sheep figures in different cults among many pastoral peoples. In Greece as in Rome, the Ram was propitiated in various cults. In Cyprus, Aphrodite is represented as riding the Ram and the Ram was a consecrated sacrificial animal. Amon, the god of Thebes, is ram-headed.

The Scape Goat

The Ram is the chosen animal for bearing the sins and evils, among certain peoples. Thus originated the term, Scape goat. According to the custom of the Jews, the Ram is supposed to be laden with the sins of the people and driven to the wilderness. It is a famillar sight to see a Ram at market places in South India, owned by no body and feeding fat on what it gets round about. This practice seems to be a heritage from the Semitic culture and as a custom, it prevails among the Muslims of South India.

These manifold beliefs and habits seem to have had risen from a pastoral state of society. It was a pastoral habit to fix upon an animal, as representative of the whole species and to let it roam free.

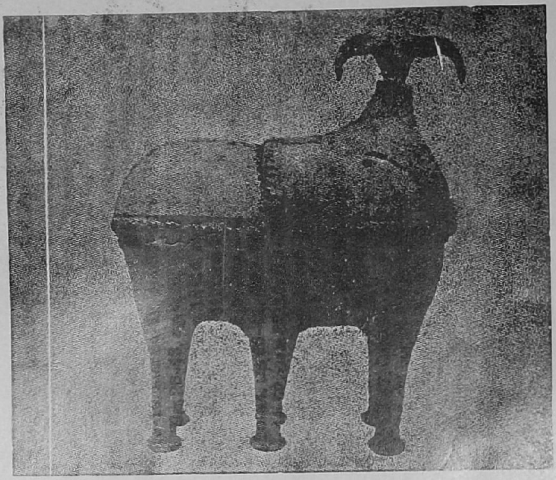
Sheep farming is still a flourishing industry round about the region where the Ram Sarcophagus was discovered. The economy of the people, dependent on their flocks of sheep, has apparently given the animal a special recognition in this pastoral society. This traditional association, co-ordinated to the concept of a soul animal, of conveying the soul of the deceased to the other world-all these have materialised in the form of a consecration burial of the skeletal remains of the deceased in this cleverly modelled pottery Ram Sarcophagus, unique among such finds in South India, an object that has aroused wide spread interest.

ANNEXURE III

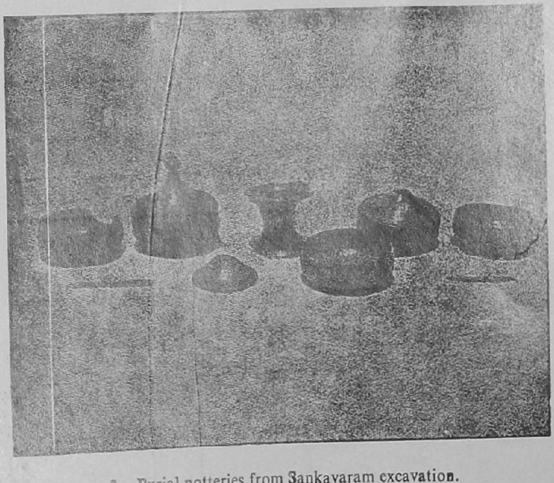
Finds from the Site of Markapuram village, near Porumamilla, Cuddapah Dist.

Sl. No.	Accession No.	Description
1.	19/35	Sarcophagus :—Ram headed. Lid made into two pieces, the second arching upward with an aperture in which the head is inserted. The tub like portion: L: 81 c.m. width 29 c.m. H. 52·5 c.m. (including the legs). Back lid: L. 45 c.m. width 41 c.m. H. 20·5 c.m. Front lid: L. 47 c.m. width 42 c.m. H. 33 c.m.
2.	20/35	Pot :—Wide mouthed squat type. Shield shaped bottom. Redware M/d. 16 c.m., H. 12 c.m.
3.	21/35	Pot :—Wide mouthed, squat type with flat bottom Redware M/d. 15 c.m.. H. 12 c m.
4.	22/35	Pot :—Narrower mouth and rounded rim. Grooves round the shoulder, Polished on outer surface. The outer surface got pealed off at different places. Squat type and redware. M/d. 11·5 c.m., H. 14 c.m
5.	23/35	Pot :—Wide mouted, redware. bottom broken, and rounded shoulder. M/d. 13 c.m., H. 11·5 c.m.
6.	24/35	Pot :—Wide mouthed, smaller in size and grooves round the shoulder, redware M/d. 11·5 c.m., H. 11·5 c.m.
7.	25a/35	Pot :—Wide mouthed redware. M/d. 13·5 c.m., H. 8 c.m.
8.	25b/35	Lid :—Lid of the pot No. 25a/35. Redware. D. 13·5 c.m., H. 3·5 c.m.
9.	26/35	Bowl :—Wide moutned pot. Redware and flat rim. M/d. 12·5 c.m. H. 8 c.m.
10.	27/35	Pan :—Blackware with concentric rings in the centre. Broken at the bottom, M/d. 14 c.m., H. 5 c.m.
11.	28/35	Pan :—Blackware with concentric rings at the centre. M/d. 14·5 c.m.,
12.	29a/35	Pan :—Blackware with concentric rings at the centre. M/d. 14 c.m., 4·5 c.m.
13.	29b/35	Lid :—Blackware, knob broken. M/d. 13 c.m., H. 3 c.m.
14.	30/35	Pan :—Blackware and broken at the rim M/d. 14 c.m.. H. 5.5 c.m.
15.	31a/35	Bowl :—Blackware, pan like, broken at the bottom. M/d. 14.5 c.m., H. 6 c.m.
16.	31b/35	Lid :—Lid of the bowl No. 31a/35, blackware., D. 15 c.m., H. 10·5 c.m.
17.	32/35	Lid :—Small conical. Blackware. D. 10·5 c.m., H. 3·5 c.m.
18.	33/35	Pan :—Blackware, badly broken. M/d. 20 c.m., H. 5 c.m.
19.	34/35	Ring stand :—Blackware broken. M/d. 12 c.m., H. 10 c.m.
20.	35/35	Pot :—Redware badly broken.
21.	36/35 to 41/35	Legs :—Six legs of two broken sarcophagai.

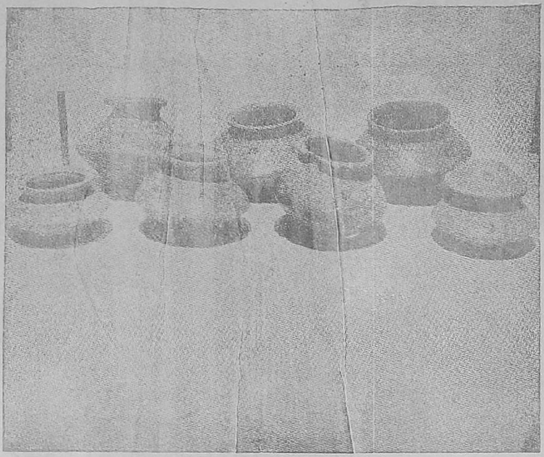
Plate I



1. Ram sarcophagus from Sankavaram.



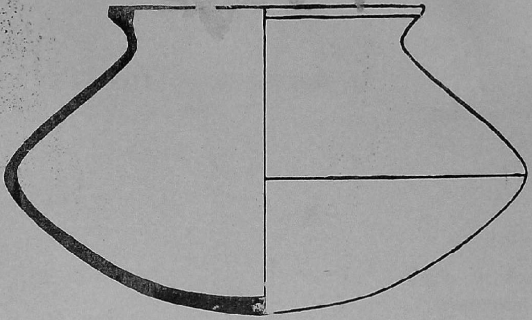
2. Burial potteries from Sankavaram excavation.



3. Burial potteries from Sankavaram excavation

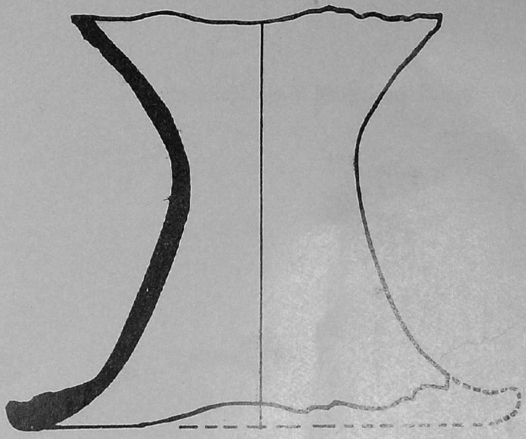
4. Four footed elephant shaped urn from Tunghabhadra

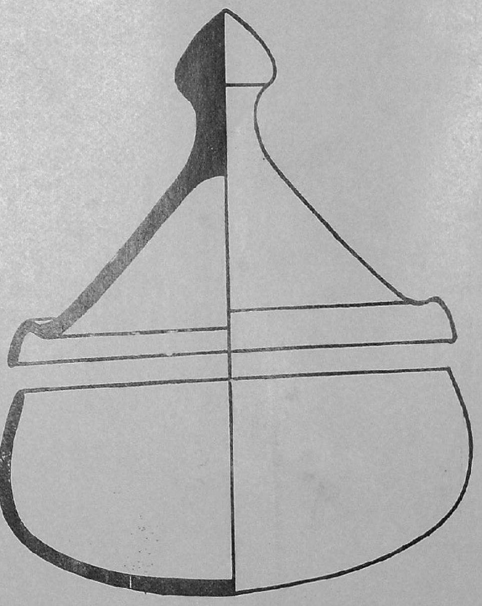
Plate III



<- 5. Section of pottery No. 21/35.

6. Section of pottery No. 34/35. ->





<- 7. Section of potteries. Nos. 31a/35 & 31b/35.

(Pottery sketches reduced to 1/3 of original size)

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